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ABSTRACT

The United States government has no true national rural policy toward education and rural community development. The need exists for the federal government to assume a different role in these areas from what it has traditionally played. In the past the federal education enterprise has failed to relate the design, purpose, or implementation of its programs to the needs of rural Americans. Rural school districts thus continue to lag behind urban areas with respect to federal funds. When access to federal programs depends on number of disadvantaged students rather than proportions, small rural schools often lose out to affluent metropolitan ones. Federal policies are often based on preparing students for an urban life rather than answering the needs of a rural setting. Rural communities are in great need of institutions that will strengthen rural life, serve all members of all ages in the community, and link education to other social services and economic enterprises within the area. Education must be linked with other rural development activities, and rural development itself should be based on comprehensive rural studies rather than on applications of urban models as determinants of rural life. This document discusses rural problems, explores shortcomings in U.S. policy, and examines a number of successful rural community development efforts. Specific recommendations to improve federal programs in education and rural community development are also given. (Author/DS)

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FEDERAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

An Unrealized Potential

by

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Background

This paper addresses the need for Federal policy to play a different role in education and rural community development than the one it has traditionally played. In presenting our thoughts on the problem, and in making recommendations for changes, we have deliberately chosen the term "policy" in preference to "program." We agree with the late E. F. Schumacher, who asserted in 1973 that "it is not enough to have a new policy: new methods of organization are required, because the policy is in the implementation." (His italics.) Among other things, this statement suggests that the discrepancy between the rhetoric about national goals, and the practical consequences of actual policies upon the lives of individual Americans and their communities, may be vast at times. We will argue that this is indeed the case with respect to education and the rural community. Rhetorically and publicly, the national sentiment continues to laud Jeffersonian ideals of agrarianism and the ethic of political democracy as it was expressed in the eighteenth century and practiced in early nineteenth-century America. But in reality, we have no national rural policy. That means that the education enterprise within the Federal establishment is neither compelled nor encouraged to relate the design, purpose, or implementation of its programs to the needs of rural Americans.

Thus rural individuals and rural communities have had substantial experience with the "cognitive dissonance" that arises when there is indeed a large discrepancy between what is espoused and what is executed. The disparity between what we advocate as national ideals and what our policies do to rural people constitutes a chasm so vast that -- we argue -- it has had to be bridged with explanations of "rural deprivation" that contain a great

deal more intellectual evasiveness than critical analysis, i.e., the explanations typically fail to take prior national policies and their effects in action into account. Moreover, given this context, national policy makers have to date provided no credible explanation for our failure in recent years to have a national rural policy than complements the nation's many urban policies. That we need such a policy is born out by the following occurrences:

- The decline in the number of small farms from 4.8 million to 1.8 million between 1935 and 1979:
- the conversion (or in some cases the stalemate) of many traditional agricultural communities into "communities" of wealthy landholders and an economically marginal lower class, without the ballast of a viable middle-class sector*
- the disappearance of local businesses that once supported local agricultural enterprises and provided essential goods and services to communities
- the disproportionalte occurrence of poverty in rural America (12% for the nation as a whole; 15% for the rural sector in 1975)
- the inequitable allocation of Federal funds to small rural schools (See Table I of Appendix)
- the reduction in the number of school districts from 128,000 in 1930 to 17,000 in 1972 (with rural schools taking a larger share of the losses)
- the unavailability of Federal education data on the rural sector and the subsequent difficulty in constructing a national portrait of the country's rural schools
- the tendency of rural youths to enter school later, progress through school more slowly, leave school earlier, attend postsecondary institutions less frequently, and participate less frequently in adult education programs than does the rest of the population
- the declining rate of education attainment for black male farm labourers between 1968 and 1975 and the decline in literacy for black female workers during the same period
- the difficulty rural Americans have in obtaining adequate health care and the correlative reluctance of medical professionals to locate in rural places (partly because of concern about quality in rural public schools)

* We wish to note this occurrence in two states - Alabama and Illinois - that differ so radically on most other dimensions that they may illustrate the pervasiveness of this problem.

Thus we do need a national rural policy that will respond to considerations of equal opportunity, the freedom that only choices can bring, and the national interest in revitalizing rural life. We recognize that in advocating such a policy, we should take care to explain what we mean and what we do not mean. We mean to suggest that rural problems of decline, population shifts, lack of access to resources, and general inequities should be addressed within a comprehensive framework that takes into account the total ecology and that does not create more problems in one sector while solving those in another. We do not mean that we need yet another monolithic policy (especially in education) with numerous, detailed, and uniform specifications. Nor do we intend to recommend any type of policy that would hinder one of the conditions necessary for genuine development, i.e., informed and creative problem-solving activities at the local level.

The diversity of rural places, as well as the fact that many of them face serious social and economic problems, must be acknowledged at the beginning of any endeavor to formulate workable plans and policies. Rural communities differ in many respects: they have different histories, different geographic and climatic conditions, different racial and ethnic mixes, and different degrees of poverty and isolation. In addressing the role of education in rural development, therefore, we build the fact of rural diversity into each generalization, statement of need, and recommendation.

It is important, however, to acknowledge two other facts about rural education when making any statement about "national policy." First of all, we have only a very slight knowledge base about the effects of current national education policies on rural areas. And second, such an absence may be attributed, in large part, to the fact that national policies contain inherent assumptions of schooling as it occurs in metropolitan, rather than nonmetro-

politan, places. That is, many of the programs of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as well as much education research, have assumed large populations of students, sizeable staffs, and the need to prepare students for an urban life. Table I of the Appendix portrays one manifestation of this attitude.

There is another quantitative respect in which the rural sector may be omitted, slighted, or simply not taken into account. When access to Federal programs depends on numbers of disadvantaged (including handicapped) students, rather than on their proportions in the population, the poor rural school may be ineligible or seriously crippled in its ability to secure special programs. (Thus there are, from a rural point of view, serious reservations about the new Title I formula, which will slant funding toward districts with large numbers of the disadvantaged. By that rule, even a relatively affluent metropolitan district can "win" over a small rural district with only several hundred students enrolled.) (See Gjelten, 1979, p. 59.) This discrepancy looms even larger today, for rural communities appear to face a difficult education situation because of the history of education policy. That is, rural communities need educational institutions and arrangements that strengthen, rather than debilitate, rural life. They need education that provides services to all members of the community by (1) serving mature and older populations, as well as the school-aged, directly, (2) providing young people the option of staying in the community so that outstanding youthful talent is not lost, and (3) linking education to other social services and to economic enterprises within the community. Historically, however, the pattern has been one of providing incentives for the most talented people to leave their rural settings and seek personal advancement elsewhere.

Development as a Social Process

"Development," we are told, "exploits a delicate web of human acceptance." (Meadows: 1973) The same author continued:

> Development is a policy-laden word...And it has, in addition, its own dimensions and parameters of persuasion. In a sense, 'development' has become a persuasively defining word--at least in the industrialized sectors of the world. (pp.29-30)

Two factors add significance to the above remarks. One element is of long-standing; the second is a more recent phenomenon.

Individualism and Personal Mobility

When we examine the sad condition that characterizes many rural communities in the United States, we cannot avoid asking how a rich and prosperous nation could have allowed its countryside and its labourers of "the land" to experience such decline and hardship. We suggest that the failure to look after the countryside, which is an essential component of national well-being, did not arise as a result of intentional neglect. We suggest rather that one finds the answer in the historical interplay of ideas, and in their juxtaposition upon an American scene that was for two centuries a land whose frontiers gave virtually unrestrained opportunities for individuals to "express" and "profit" themselves.

Alfred North Whitehead offered this analysis forty-seven years ago:

> One of the most general philosophic notions to be used in the analysis of civilized societies is to consider the effect on social life due to the variations of emphasis between Individual Absoluteness and Individual Relativity. Here "absoluteness" means the notion of release from essential dependence on other members of the community in respect to modes of activity, while relativity means the converse fact of essential relatedness antagonism between notions of freedom and of social organization. (p.)

In an earlier section of the same book, Whitehead commented on a great irony in western intellectual development:

> At the moment when the "brotherhood of man" triumphed, the intellectual world was meditating on political economy conceived in terms of unrestrained competition, on Malthus' iron law that the mass of the population must always press on the limits of bare subsistence, and on the zoological law of natural selection by which an iron environment crushed out the less favoured species, and on Hume's criticism of the nature of the soul. (p.)

It is only by comprehending the inadequacies of past policies, we suggest, that we may gain the insight to offer more adequate alternatives. Clearly, we need to examine the present need for rural development in the context of Whitehead's distinctions. It has been the character of the national "soul" to espouse freedom and opportunities for individuals. That espousal can be stretched to justify the exploitation of some by others; it can, moreover, justify the exploitation of natural environments and the neglect of social ones.

While individuals may have been exhorted (and exhorting) to achieve and acquire as individuals, the nation was becoming wealthy by virtue of great national resources and the scientific-technological expertise that made it a great industrial power. Thus its prosperity has had an urban base, and it has raided and deplenished the countryside of both workers and resources. Everyone, it was said, would profit from the general prosperity. That has not been entirely the case, of course. Among those who have suffered most are the rural poor and the rural community. One of the more serious consequences of too much Individual Absolutism is the reflection (through programs) of a social policy that has failed to question the "absolute right" of individuals to act in their own best interests.

An analysis of the general or overall effect of Federal programs for public schools might show that <u>in the main</u> programs such as Title I ESEA assume an <u>individual upward mobility model</u> of schooling, that in reality they serve national interests that are already well established, as well as some individual interests, and that they ignore or overlook the best interests of local communities (which might be considered "groups").

The connection between "individual upward mobility" as a model for schooling and enhancement of the interests of established national groups may not be at first apparent. An explanation is therefore offered.

(The following passage is excerpted from An Analysis of Federal Education Programs from the Perspective of Rural Development Needs by Gail A. Parks.)

"At various crucial points in the history of American education, it has become apparent that certain groups -- European immigrants between about 1900-1920, blacks and then other minorities in the 1960's, women in the early 1970's -- were sufficiently restless about a condition of relatively low status and limited opportunity as to be potentially disruptive. At such times, actions that gave out a particular message were undertaken, the message being that policy makers would redirect education or related policies so as to assure, for talented individuals within all groups, opportunities for recognition and success.

"That promise does not appear to have been denied, for one can without difficulty name talented individuals born Italian, Polish, poor, black, Hispanic, female, etc. who have achieved notable success or prominence. Moreover, the visible social disruptions that preceded changes in relevant policies appear to have diminished or died.

"Since disruptions of the social order can be assumed to be troublesome to groups having a large chunk of society's resources and prestige, and since opening up opportunities to disenfranchised or underserved persons tends to disfuse disorder, it may also be assumed that to provide opportunities within the individual upward mobility framework is to serve the interests of established groups, i.e., those that control private and public spheres and that thereby may be considered national, if not international, in orientation and influence.

"The success of these policies might be attributed to their ability to offer "hope" and to ground that hope in a reality. For in reality, individuals from underprivileged groups have "made it" and are "making it." This occurence might "prove" that "making it" is up to the individual, once dis-

criminatory barriers have been removed. Or it might suggest at least a fair chance in a lottery: since some significant number of persons will acquire the more desirable slots that society has to offer, it is reasonable for any given individual to assume under conditions of fair competition, that (s)he may be one of the lucky ones.

"Thus this condition arises: the cumulative effects of policies intended to compensate for prior inequities or to change the odds in favor of the previously disenfranchised do "work" for some of those who are willing to accept the condition of individual competition, and they preserve the social order from disruptions that might challenge the right to dominance by entrenched groups. Powerful groups can accommodate members from minority groups or the previously poor without damaging their structures of influence. Those who make it through the sorting or winnowing process of formal schooling will have acquired some characteristics that place a distance between them and their group of origin; and though they may continue to promote the well being of that group, they can usually be counted on to do so within 'acceptable' guidelines.

"It appears, then, that localities may suffer from policies that address only individual and national needs, or that address national needs through individual upward mobility, or the reverse. The local community gets left out of the equation. This omission has had and continues to have particular significance for rural communities."

A Search for "Community"

Norbert Elias (1978) has presented a cogent argument that development always builds on the present and the past regardless of its apparent modernity. In other words, he views the quality of life as embracing economic political, social, and spiritual components. The illustrations that follow capture these basic ingredients.

Minnesota: Education as Basic

Staples, Minnesota, a town threatened with economic decline, used a strategy of "educational improvement for community development." (Gjelten: 1978, p. 2). It is a twenty-year story that began in 1959 when trouble came to the railroads which had been a major part of the local economy "throughout most of the town's history." (Gjelten: 1978, p. 2). At that time, the town's leaders decided to take action.

From the start of this local development effort an "image building" strategy was a central element: "Because there was a larger objective in making the community attractive for development, it was important that it be known for its good education." (Gjelten, p. 4). That decision led to a subsequent policy of developing local grantsmanship and was linked with aggressive salesmanship, the development of a strong vocational education program, and the use of high-school students' services in improving the community (using the schools' heavy equipment to grade for a new airport and reclaiming a weedy lake) and enticing businesses to locate in Staples (preparing industrial sites at no charge to the new industry). In addition, the Area Vocational School's Director was responsive to local community people desiring vocational skills, arranging for instruction for displaced miners and for farmers who needed to learn equipment repair and maintenance.

In cooperating with various economic endeavors and in using grantsmanship to enrich the system and promote the image of Staples as a "progressive" town, the school has played "an activist role," one that Gjelten has concluded was "both natural and obvious":

> First, it could commit its considerable resources to the task: the personal influence and expertise of its staff (mostly long-term residents committed to the community), the knowledge and contacts to which it had access, the labor and skills of its

> students, and the equipment and facilities which it controlled. Secondly, it could contribute to the community by generating publicity for the place. (Gjelten, p. 22).

Illinois: A Viable Model?

"Our aim is to get as many people in the community involved as possible," declared Terry Clark, assistant manager of a men's clothing store. He was referring to the community's efforts to capitalize on a program supported by the Kellogg Foundation.

A nearby junior college (Lake Land, Mattoon, Illinois) had received a grant from the Michigan-based corporation to render technical assistance to rural communities. Arthur, a small (2000 population) town situated in east-central Illinois and boasting the state's Amish settlement, is functioning as an operational model.

In the summer of 1978 a community study sponsored by Lake Land elicited a total of 18 local "priorities." Responses to them encompass

- a training course for store employees, emphasizing service to the public, including tourists.
- a class in welding so that high school graduates can be prepared for jobs which will enable them "to stay in Arthur." A local industry is supplying instructional materials and instructors.
- a movement to establish a hot meals program for senior citizens. This effort is spearheaded by a retired minister.

In words that Elias might have spoken, Clark cautioned: "We know all this can't be done overnight. This will be going on for several years."

Alabama: The School System as a Social Laboratory

In the Fall of 1976, a British scholar produced a case study for a project funded by the National Science Foundation. The goal was to portray science education as taught and experienced in the public schools of the nation. Excerpts from his work highlight the influence of historical events upon the community and its schools.

(The following passage is excerpted from Case Studies in Science Education: Pine City by Rob Walker.)

"In the eyes of everyone in Pecan County, integration is the key issue, perhaps particularly in the schools; but anything tied to education pervades the community as a whole. Sometimes it seems as though the schools, and the high school especially, are a laboratory for the community, for it is there that social problems are brought to scrutiny. Some people feel that if integration fails in the schools, few aspects of people's lives would escape the impact of that failure.

"One consequence of the mood of successful social experiment in the schools is to make the schools look and feel important. In other parts of the country people may question the relevance of schools as institutions, and ask them to justify themselves. In Pecan County there are people who may question the relevance of some parts of the curriculum, but no one seems to question the schools themselves.

"It is not hard to detect this feeling of the schools' running ahead of the community in desegregation, even though the clues are often apparently trivial. They are seen more clearly on social than academic occasions. For instance, a year ago the high school scheduled the first dance to be open to both black and white students. Although the principal had been hesitant about allowing it to take place and ominous rumors ran through the town prior to the event, it proved to be an evening of innocent pleasure. Apparently stimulated by the students' success, the faculty this year organized their own party. It was a friendly, if somewhat formal affair, but it developed into a square dance in the gym, perhaps a third of the guests staying on. Next day the various stories circulated the town. There's no knowing for sure, but it seemed the white girls on the faculty quite enjoyed the scandal of dancing with blacks. And some of the black teachers were apparently amused at the incredulity of soul brothers out of school square dancing!

"The process of adaptation may still be active. The gaps in communication are less marked than they once were, but spaces still exist between words. One teacher articulated the point clearly when she said, 'You know I talk to Miss Hall (a black teacher) every day. We work together. But I never really know what she is thinking.' The cordiality and hospitality that remain characteristic of social behavior in the rural South retain a degree of ambiguity that allows people to retreat behind custom and habit."

Shifting Arenas

Ironically, an intensified search for a sense of community is emerging on the heels of far-reaching educational deliberations at the national level. The Alabama portrayal mirrors the dual impact of the 1954 Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education landmark decision and, a decade later, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act identified with President Johnson's ambitions to create a "Great Society." A welter of political activity affecting the educational arena has transpired in their wake. Campbell and Layton (1969) saw the tensions spawned by this mixture of local, state and national policies as changing the locus of many decisions affecting the schools. "Policy-making is in a state of flux," they submitted, "and societal forces are altering local policy deliberations in significant ways." (p. 15)

Policy-makers are still operating in a sea of uncertainty, although rural school districts continue to lag behind urban areas with respect to federal funding. Jonathan Sher (1977) asserted that rural institutions should be favored because federal aid is supposed to benefit "disadvantaged" populations, and there is a greater incidence of both economic and educationally disadvantaged in the countryside. Passow (1959), Spitze (1969), and Cosby and Picou (1979) are other scholars whose work lends credence to Sher's allegations. But Gjelten (1979) pinpoints an even more fundamental dilemma.

> There are actually two ways the Federal government may be guilty of a bias against rural schools and school children in the allocation of its aid. First, it may be that rural schools do not get a qunatitative share of the aid. Secondly, they may not get a fair qualitative share: the programs under which the federal government dispenses its aid dollars may have been fashioned to meet the needs of urban and suburban schools primarily. They may be inappropriate programs for rural conditions. (p. 4)

Table 1 provides an overview of federal legislation affecting public schooling. Gjelten's pairing of quantitative/qualitative judgments was treated in remarks by Alex Mercure, Assistant Secretary for Rural Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture, at the annual meeting of the Community Development Society of America, Blacksburg, Virginia, July 30-August 3, 1978. Among the latter's criticisms were the following.

1. "Urban models" are employed to determine rural needs. This practice has detrimental effects in all aspects of rural development.

2. Money (financing) isn't free-floating and readily available in all parts of the nation "even though OMB (Office of Management and Budget) thinks so."

3. We need goals to enhance rural development, not a "menu" of programs: "Without goals, maintenance of programs becomes the goal, and flexibility in creating social policy is lost." (his italics).

4. "Bad policy is not an evil decision of the heart but reflects a closed ethno-centric viewpoint of life."

Community Needs and National Priorities

Peshkin (1978) explored the basic tensions and poignant trade-offs spawned when rural schools try to accommodate both individual opportunity and the communal good. A noted economist (Solo, 1975) anticipated such results when he wrote:

> Social alternatives are not given. They must be created. Beyond choice, more fundamental and more distinctively human than choice, is the task of developing the alternatives between which we choose. The essential social process is not of choosing but of learning, and the most important choice is in choosing what to learn. (p. 207)

An American observer (Gehler, 1969) asserted that "the more homogeneous the community, the less conflict or controversy will occur involving the school." (p.) In his study of Effingham and its schools, Hoke (1972) cautioned that collective bargaining in the public sector would rigorously test her conclusion. Homogeneity could well intensify the degree of conflict once it was underway, he suggested, because of the lasting influence of basic assumptions concerning "proper" conduct. Recently, Parks (1979) examined the community education ideas of an Australian, Don Edgar (1978), particularly his contention that communities are built on conflict rather than cooperation.

(The following passage is excerpted from Analysis of Federal Education Program from the Perspective of Rural Development Needs by Gail A. Parks.)

"The idea that conflict is a necessary precondition for community development is intriguing. We might contrast the practical consequences of applying this definition with our own tendency to speak vaguely and nostalgically of 'integrated rural communities,' and our other tendency to apply the term 'community' to any aggregate of people and institutions within a designated geographic area (e.g., the New York community, the Squaw Valley community, the Harlan County community, the 'Mansfield' community). What we do less often than talk generally or nostalgically is define the attributes of a functioning rural community. It seems easier to identify the problems of declining rural areas in quantitative terms, and thereby infer the need for a "more is better" solution, than to specify the structural and functional characteristics of dynamic rural conditions. The latter approach would encourage the logical next step of attempting to delineate the types of developmental activities needed to revitalize communities. Thus it is not enough to say that poor rural communities lack adequate economic institutions, employment opportunities for the young, social services, educational offerings and opportunities, transportation, sewers, and general esprit and pluck. What we need to do is find a way to indicate the enabling devices that would allow rural communi-

ties to re-create themselves so that they are not always in the crisis posture of petitioning a state or Federal agency to "rescue" them from some imminent catastrophe. Far from being necessary, monolithic approaches to rural development seem to prevent the essential condition of flexible guidelines that can accommodate unique local needs and resources. What does stand out, however, is that systemic improvement of rural education seems unlikely to occur unless educational improvement is linked to other improvement efforts."

Parks' closing statement is a reminder that the primary concern of this paper has focused on the role of the federal government. Conversely, in recent years, and particularly since the advent of general revenue sharing, the function of state government and its policies have gained prominence. The fact that public schools were specifically prohibited from receiving direct financial assistance by way of revenue sharing adds another dimension to this political/educational scene. So does the appearance of several lawsuits charging that extant patterns of state and local funding are actually a denial of equal opportunity to residents of poor districts.

Prior to the arrival of revenue sharing, though, the Elementary and Secondary Education legislation of 1965 had altered relationships between federal government, state agencies, and local bodies. Campbell and Layton (1969) described one result.

> Title V has had a major impact upon state departments of education. It has permitted substantial growth in the size of professional staffs, provided marked increases in operating budgets, and allowed departments to undertake some new programs and expand existing programs.
>
> . . .
>
> The findings indicate that much of the new money went to restore traditional programs and for the employment of additional personnel. However, the new legislation has made state departments even more dependent upon federal funds. (p. 15)

Recommendations

The Context

Rural Differences

The final report of an HEW study entitled Getting Human Services to Rural People emphasized that conditions affecting social and economic development in rural regions are truly distinctive.

> It is evident that one major barrier is the lack of recognition by HEW staff that getting services to people in rural areas is different in important respects from delivery in urban areas. (p. 32)
>
> . . .
>
> Delivering services to rural residents is both more difficult and more expensive...The reasons for this seem obvious but appear to be widely unknown or ignored. Population density is low and people are spread over large geographic expanses ...Distance from points of service provision operates as a barrier...since transportation services are generally unavailable in rural areas...Many local rural governments lack the resources to meet even the basic service needs of their citizens...let alone the special services needed by vulnerable subpopulations. (p. 34)
>
> . . .
>
> Lack of information about rural projects receiving HEW funding is a significant barrier. (p.39)

We agree that the problem of scant systematic knowledge about rural education exacerbates the difficulties of formulating a sound rural education policy. "Networking," as recommended in the HEW report noted above, is receiving considerable attention as a potential response to the unique problems of communication and human interaction in rural arenas. Henderson (1978) characterizes networks as having no headquarters, no formal leaders, and lacking chains of command. They are free-form and self-organizing, she asserted, and composed of people sharing a similar world view and similar values. Perhaps more important, Henderson claims that few organizational theorists have yet studied networks "because they are evanescent, ebbing and flowing around issues, ideas, and knowledge." Her basic argument was amplified in another source (Cohen and Lorentz, 1977). Networks are functional systems, the authors agreed, and they deal with matters of actual or potential need.

Demographic Changes

It is our belief that lack of understanding relative to the importance of population shifts represents a very serious, if not immediate, threat to rural communities and their institutions. Underestimation of the significance of demographic trends is not confined to rural settings; nonetheless, rural regions are especially vulnerable because current patterns of reverse-migration follow on the heels of years of selective out-migration of its youth. Calvin Beale (1975) foresaw the picture evident in many rural areas today. His writings reinforce statements of the 1960's, in which the authors (Kleitsch, et. al., 1964) warned that population changes are closely related to other ongoing social forces, with economic, political, and general cultural trends often masking the impending effects of demographic movements. Gail Parks noted in an NRC Working Paper (1979) that

> it has simply not been the habit of American educators at policy levels to see education as part of a larger community enterprise. It seems rather the case that, as the education enterprise has grown, it has sought to establish itself autonomously and, like other organizations within private and public spheres, it has competed for power and prestige. That is not surprising, nor is it particularly an indictment of the education establishment. Its actions have probably both mirrored and helped create the current national policy milieu. (pp 1-2)

The void explored above has triggered two sets of empirical questions that need to be answered with respect to the place of public education in a rural development policy: "(1) What is the effect of present Federally-mandated programs on rural school systems? Is it true that cumulative detailed and specific reporting requirements impose undue hardships on rural superintendents, directing their attention away from instruction and forcing a focus on administrivia? Do these requirements help or hinder the small district's ability truly to respond to needs of individual students? Are rural schools receiving their fair share of resources provided federally? (2) Is there a relationship between school consolidation and rural decline, and if so, what is its nature? Are rural communities harmed when their

schools are closed? Are students better served in consolidated schools? What is the quality of education provided to students in small schools that have not been consolidated? What conditions of schooling would maximize opportunities for both individual student development and rural community development? Is it really necessary, as some contenders appear to believe, to choose one or the other?" (Parks: Working Paper, p. 5)

The United States as a national system

Research on rural education should accommodate the differences among states with respect to their patterns of interaction with LEA's as well as relationships between SEA's and federal agencies. New York, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, New Hampshire, Iowa and Oregon, for example, are known for their reliance on intermediate units or districts; in contrast, Illinois, Alabama, California, among others, have not formally established these entities. Do intermediate agencies substantially improve the delivery of special services or resources? Are they a viable alternative to consolidation? In states relying on countywide administrative districts--e.g., Flordia--are matters pertaining to equity and access better handled than in states where small districts abound--e.g., Illinois and Nebraska?

Essential Considerations

In four rural education-rural development schemes examined by Gail Parks, the following features were noted as being essential for the process to work:*

1. Development of and reliance on local knowledge, competence, resources, and expertise
2. A "bottom-up" process
3. Development of networks and linkages

* Four countries were involved in such efforts: Norway, Scotland, Australia, and the U.S. (Minnesota).

4. Linking services across agencies and organizations

5. Emphasis on planning and process, with process seen as an end as well as a means

6. Emphasis on sharing and cooperation

7. Coordination of services

8. A comprehensive approach

9. Expectation that time and patience will be required if effects are durable.

Recommended Actions and Policies

1. Our first recommendation is that Federal agencies concerned with education programs assure that each program made available for the rural sector contain provisions to accommodate most, if not all, of the provisions enumerated above.

2. Our second recommendation builds on the fact of rural difference and rural diversity. A network embracing both formal and informal institutions actually pursuing rural matters should be established. It could be affiliated with a federal agency, such as the USDA, but it could also be housed in a private organization. Computer facilities and other forms of telecommunications should be readily available. The central staff would remain small, with resource persons sought for short-term assistance in handling specific needs or requests. The Cohen-Lorentz stress on networks as based on an idea exchange in action settings is suggestive of the dilemma posed for most formalized versions of information centers--namely, they are too slow in responding to action-oriented requests.

The hub of the network outlined here would have ready access to quality data, and it would act in an advocacy role on behalf of rural education. For example, network staff might facilitate the work of another agency, perhaps the National Science Foundation, the latter's research on environmental issues and rural development, or the Office of Environmental Education, which

is trying to affect the curriculum now operating in elementary and secondary schools.

3. Our third recommendation addresses the specific meaning of rural development by advocating cross-agency coordination at the Federal level. That is, relevant agencies should contain designated rural bureaus or programs within their organizational structures; and a cross-agency coordinating body should have planning and oversight authority for all Federal undertakings that have a rural potential, as most do in actuality if not usually in design.

4. Our fourth recommendation responds to rural qualities of smallness and sparsity, with particular reference to difficulties small districts encounter in competing for Federal funds. We should make possible the "bundling" of Federal programs for rural districts. If it were possible for rural schools to indicate a need for a specific bundle of programs - e.g., Title I, Handicapped, Arts Education, and Community Education - by application on one simplified form, the justification for need could be spelled out clearly and the plan for program integration made explicit. This "block grant" approach for rural communities would enable them to plan and administer their programs comprehensively rather than in piecemeal fashion.

5. Our fifth recommendation proposes a remedy for the current Federal failure to provide for adequate research and data collection. It is in two parts:

(a) We suggest that the National Center for Education Statistics be designated the official body for gathering data on the rural population in the context of education and that it be asked to publish annual reports on the status of rural education. At a minimum, NCES should be directed to cease its practice of eliminating the smallest school districts from its national samples. (For more specificity on this recommendation, see Parks and Sher, 1979.)

(b) We recommend the enactment of legislation designed to begin immediately the filling of huge gaps in the rural education information-data base. We need to have a National Center for Rural Studies, preferably a cross-agency effort that will attempt to create and continually update a portrait of rural America, somewhat in the manner of a National Observatory of Rural Events. (See Parks and Sher.)

Summary

There are about 115 education programs within USOE alone. Since NIE was established in 1972, it has spent between $75 million and $110 million annually on education research, development, and dissemination. In addition, ASE funds policy centers to study education issues. Numerous Federal agencies outside DHEW provide funds for education research, development, and services, e.g., the Department of Agriculture, the National Science Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. At this time there are 23 legislative authorizations for education and $11.3 billion available in appropriations. A scandalously small amount of this activity has a rural focus. Yet research on and policy analysis of rural education matters would not only tend to benefit rural schools a great deal; they are also essential for coping with (1) the host of unanswered questions on the rural sector that currently frustrate efforts to say much that is intelligible, and (2) the problems that rural areas are facing as a result of demographic shifts and social changes. Unfortunately, one may count on the fingers of one hand the comprehensive rural studies that have been supported by ASE and NIE collectively. (Parks and Sher: 1979, p. 24). Gail Bass's study (Rand Corporation) of funds allocation patterns within Title IV-B and IV-C is the sole ASE rural contribution to date. For NIE there are the Experimental Schools Program, the ERIC/CRESS system, some selected efforts at

the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory, Paul Nachtigal's Rural Schools Improvement Study (which is just beginning), Jonathan Sher's early work on school consolidation, and very little else. The 1977 study of Title I funds allocation expenditures and allocation analyzed patterns in rural districts but did not issue a separate report on the rural sector.

There is little evidence that those agencies that are major gatekeepers for the education knowledge base have any interest in or concern for the rural sector's education problems. The studies that are ongoing or starting up, however, do promise to provide rich information. They are eagerly awaited, but they will not be enough.

An adequate response to rural needs must be responsive to the specific concerns that Dr. Ray Marshall articulated in 1977. In summarizing the meaning emerging from analyses in Human Resources Dimensions of Rural Development, Dr. Marshall observed that "the overwhelming conclusion is that economic development depends heavily on the quality of human resource development." (p. 219).

We concur, and we wish to emphasize once more the point that has been our major theme throughout this paper: the need to link education with other development activities in rural settings. In this context, we find Marshall's remarks on the function of public policy for rural areas particularly appropriate and timely.

> A rural development strategy should increase the options available to people and provide better information for making choices. Public policy in the United States has accelerated the displacement of people...and has done almost nothing to prepare displaced people for change. Rural development policy should make it possible for people who decide (emphasis ours) to leave rural areas to have (needed) information and access to training. By the same token, public policy should make it possible for those who elect to remain...to develop themselves to the point where they can at least earn enough to elevate themselves out of poverty. (pp. 222-223).

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APPENDIX

Table 1. Comparison of United States averages to school districts with enrollments under 300 pupils; Federal programs. (Provided by Gjelten, 1979)

	U.S. average	School districts with enrollments under 300
Percent of districts receiving assistance from any Federal programs	92%	76%
--From ESEA	78%	42%
--From SAFA (Impact Aid)	30%	15%
--From Vocational Education	30%	6%
--From other Federal programs	84%	66%

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. National Center for Education Statistics. Statistics of Local Public School Systems, Finances, 1970-71. Washington (NCES 75-149), 1975.

Table 2. Legislative Acts Authorizing Education Funding.
(Provided by Gjelten, 1979)

1946	National School Lunch Act
1950	School Assistance in Federally Affected Areas
1950	Indian Elementary and Secondary School Assistance Act
1958	National Defense Education Act
1963	Vocational Education Act
1964	Civil Rights Act
1964	Emergency School Aid Act
1964	Library Services and Construction Act
1964	Economic Opportunity Act (Community Services Act)
1965	Elementary and Secondary Eduation Act (ESEA)
1965	National Foundation for the Arts and Humanities Act
1968	Bilingual Education Act
1968	Higher Education Act
1968	Education Professions Development Act
1970	Alcohol and Drug Abuse Education Act
1970	Adult Education Act
1970	Environmental Education Act
1972	Cooperative Research Act (Right-to-Read)
1974	Special Projects Act
1974	Career Education Incentive Act
1976	Education for all Handicapped Children Act
1976	General Education Provisions Act
1977	Youth Employment Demonstration Projects Act

Education Amendments of 1968; 1970; 1972; 1974; 1976; 1978